CAROL *in* BIRDLAND

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IDA PRENTICE WHITCOMB

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CAROL IN BIRDLAND

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STUDENTS' TOPICAL HISTORY CHART
A BUNCH OF WILD FLOWERS FOR THE CHILDREN
HEROES OF HISTORY
YOUNG PEOPLE'S STORY OF ART
YOUNG PEOPLE'S STORY OF MUSIC
YOUNG PEOPLE'S STORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

CAROL IN BIRDLAND

CAROL IN BIRDLAND

BY
IDA PRENTICE WHITCOMB

ILLUSTRATED BY
EUNICE H. STEPHENSON

"Bird-love and bird-song
Flying here and thëre."
—*Tennyson*

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1924

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To a little bird-loving maiden.—*Hope.*

FOREWORD

IN far-away magical ages an immense mass of tradition clustered about the beginnings of history, and this has followed in its wake, century by century, always trying to link real and fabulous. Legends grow with literature, and among them are many relating to the "Winged Folk," soaring above the clouds, floating through the air, darting among the trees—legends not so well known as those on other subjects.

In the following pages I have created some typical "Birds of the Ages" supposed to have existed from earliest times—each one belonging to a special family and made to chitter and warble of its family legend. In doing this a precedent has been followed, for even from fabulous ages Folkland has made birds talk and act—thus interlinking the characteristics of the two.

I dedicate these tales to nature-loving little people who are devoted to fairy stories and who

are not so familiar with bird-lore as with other myths. Very pleasing fancies belong to these tiny impressionists—fancies that easily appeal to the imagination of children—for does anything hold a child like a story? Perhaps reading them may induce a new, live interest in the science and natural history of bird-life that in themselves sometimes seem dull.

To bird-lore are added bits from some of the exquisite poems that Folkland has inscribed to these fantastic minstrels, for one has said:

> "The loveliest things in this world of ours
> Are the ways and the songs of birds."

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CAROL IN BIRDLAND

CAROL IN BIRDLAND

INQUISITIVE LITTLE CAROL

ONCE there was a poetic, inquisitive little maiden whose name was Carol, and she loved birds and fairies. She had learned the habits and notes of a few songsters and was always eager to know more.

One day she was sitting on a mossy bank listening to the pipings overhead, for there was an unusual racket in the trees. Suddenly something happened as things will happen in fairy stories. I should have said at the beginning that this is to be a fairy story. As Carol sat there she saw dancing across the fields, coming swiftly towards her, a most picturesque little creature with a red coat, long pointed cap, and winged shoes. It goes without saying that it carried a wand surmounted by a glittering star.

Carol knew that it must be a fairy, for it looked so exactly as it ought to look and so bewitching, too, that the little fairy-lover forgot to be frightened. As it reached her it bobbed the funniest curtsey, and then in sweetest, most winning tones it spoke:

"Have you heard the historic 'Birds of the Ages' making a great hubbub in the trees? The characteristic of these birds is that they have presided over the doings of their special families since the beginning of time, and for centuries a dispute has been going on among them as to which is really King, and it has grown so insistent that they have resolved to hold a Convention to decide.

"Each one is to chirrup, not of its humdrum daily life, but of the quaint fancies and legends of its family. Then a vote will be taken as to which one is best fitted for the great honor. These birds naturally have curious, far-seeing eyes, and they have watched you, Carol, as day after day you have gazed up listening to their chitter. They feel sure that you are interested, and so they have

sent me to invite you to be present at their Convention to listen to their debates."

Then touching Carol with its wand, the fairy bobbed another curtsey and disappeared. The bewildered child, looking up, found herself in an enchanted grove. It was overarched by the bluest sky she had ever seen—trees filled with birds were glorified in the sunshine. Indeed, everything was sparkling. It was like a marvelous and mysterious place—it was *fairy-land* and the strangest thing in this wonder-world was that by the touch of the fairy's wand the spirit of Birdland had so descended upon Carol that she not only heard but understood the twitter and warbling of the feathered folk. They were discussing matters to be brought before the Convention about to open, but there was no Chairman, and just as in human Conventions, each one wished to appear first. It reminded Carol of an orchestra tuning up for a concert. She looked and listened and was perfectly fascinated.

THE CONVENTION OPENED

SUDDENLY a clanging wing was heard, and there alighted on the one naked branch at the top of a tall pine tree a lordly Eagle. Its great body, alert eyes, powerful talons, and pinions spread revealed the majestic bearing of one claiming to be Monarch of the skies.

A sudden silence fell upon all—there was not even a chirp or a whistle. Then in stentorian notes the Eagle announced:

"You need a Chairman—I will preside—the petty twitter of low-flying birds does not usually interest me, but sometimes gossip grows too insistent, and when as to-day a serious question is at stake, I must assert myself.

"I have heard many rumors about my disputed Kingship, and while I was hesitating what action to take, a good fairy told me that you had called a Convention to discuss the subject in a legendary way in order to decide who is most fit to rule.

CHAIRMAN OF THE CONVENTION

She begged me to hasten to meet my challenge, so I have left my darling eaglets and swooped earthward: the fairy has selected for me this prominent branch. It's a curious spirit that has brought you together and perhaps debate will be good; but there is no doubt in my mind as to the issue, for I am a symbolic bird from earliest ages—my domain is the sky—my vision Olympian.

"You all seem so eagerly waiting to take part that I will at once assume command. I shall allow you to warble first, then I will add the final note. Just see Aspiring Jenny Wren emerging from a cloud of green leaves, how she twitches her tail, just as if she could not wait.

"Impulsive Jenny, you may twitter first. Tell of your fascinating deeds of prowess, and you may, if you will, describe our disputed Kingship. Funny little aristocrat, proud as Chanticleer, you are a good one to lead off."

ASPIRING JENNY WREN

JENNY WREN—the wee, brown, flirting songster—delighted at being first called, shook her stump of a tail in a haughty convulsive manner and began her gushing lyrics with legends of saintly deeds.

"Breton peasants call me 'Bird of God' because I built my nest in the manger of the Christ Child and brought moss and feathers to cover the Holy Babe. I was pet of gentle Saint Francis and other Holy Fathers. Sometimes when they were hungry I deposited my eggs in their cloaks, and when they found them, such praises as they offered unto God. But, alas! I'm not always saintly—how could a bird be with a tail that sticks up like mine? I scold as well as sing.

"It's a comfort that my small size and plain coat make me inconspicuous, for dreadful things can happen to birds arrayed in gorgeous plumage. I can get out of sight in a hurry and while I'm not a

ASPIRING JENNY WREN

robber-bird, I have been able unnoticed to take part in thrilling adventures—I'll tell you about some of them now.

"For example, on the dreadful day on which Julius Cæsar was assassinated, birds were excited by the tumult in Rome, for at such times we look down upon more agony than humans can know. On that occasion I was set upon by an army of fighting birds, and I made such valiant defense that ever since I have been called 'As brave as Cæsar.' This makes me think of my Kingship to which the Eagle alluded when he introduced me. I wonder he dared refer to it, for he well knows that I am true Monarch of Birdland—that is really why he presented me first.

"And this is how it all happened. It was in a magical age when many matters were unsettled; among them styles of architecture, the best places to build, and most important of all how bold robber-birds should be punished. Things grew serious as they always grow under such circumstances, and it was felt that some one must be chosen to preside over our constant debates. We decided

that the honor should be conferred upon the one that could fly highest.

"The Eagle naturally made the first boast—he was sure he could win. If it had been a song contest, I might have stood a chance, but tiny me—could I ever distance a bird on the wing? Yet no songster could have greater aspirations. What fun it would be to rule over Birdland! Many wee people as well as wee birds have just such longings. Yes, the love of glory beats in my little breast as the love of the sun in that of boastful Chanticleer. Oh, if I could only bring down the Eagle's pompous pride! I am clever as well as petite and cleverness does sometimes win over might, and as I thought suddenly a bright idea struck me.

"Well, the time arrived for the trial. Woods and air were full of feathered folk, some coming to take part and others to witness the contest. Among them were Moping Owl, Soaring Skylark, ready to sing as it rose—and would you believe it, both Albatross and long-legged Stork determined to try, and when the signal was given, you

should have watched them as they attempted to soar into the blue.

"At last the Eagle proudly spread his mighty wings and soon was descried far above the others, coursing in great spirals towards the sun; but where was tiny Jenny? In the excitement at the start I had, unnoticed, quietly hopped upon the Eagle's head and perched there like a crest. Presently, having vastly distanced his rivals, the Eagle with one powerful screech proclaimed his Kingship. At that instant, I soared above his head, and chirped as loudly as such a sprite can chirp, 'Look up, and behold *me* victor.'

"The jealous Eagle cast upon me a sentinel glance, swooped upward, grasped me in one staunch talon and dropped me to the earth. Oh, such a fall! Do you wonder that in it I lost part of my tail, and I have never recovered it. I was crestfallen, too, but I was proud, no bird should know it. So, battered as I was, I flew into a tree and poured out an exultant strain. But, alas! very soon I discovered that my honor as well as my tail was gone. The birds called me a trickster

because I had mounted on the Eagle's wings. They were seeking a knightly leader. I have, however, ever been grateful to one of my laureates who has said that

" 'Wrens make prey
Where eagles dare not perch.'

"Birdland was merciless. A Convention was called, at which the Eagle was crowned with great pomp, and it was voted that I should be confined in a mouse-hole with Mister Owl to guard the door. The stupid creature fell asleep and with my wonted cunning I escaped. Mister Owl was twitted with carelessness, and threatened with so many things that it never dares show its face abroad in the daylight. I was very lonesome for, excepting faithful Robin, all the birds avoided me. Oh, that in some way I might redeem my character, and luckily an opportunity offered.

"There was no fire upon the earth, and birds hovering near the sun brought stories of mighty conflagrations there. So it was resolved that one

of our number should fly to the sun and seize from it a burning brand with which to light the earth. It was a dangerous mission—indeed, nothing so terrible had ever been proposed. We glanced at one another wondering who would attempt it. 'I have already had scorching experiences and I dare not go,' exclaimed the Kingfisher. The Peacock announced that its plumage was too precious to be injured; Soaring Skylark must not hurt its sweet voice; Kingly Eagle declared that a Monarch should never risk his life—while Intellectual Crow just 'cawed' at the very idea. Indeed, there were about as many objections as members of the Convention.

"I meditated, for my ambition to be a hero was once more aroused. It is true that I might die in the venture—who would care? I would do anything to restore my good name. Finally I decided to try to bring the fire, and when it was announced, I was thrilled with joy to see the new interest I inspired. Why, even Kingly Eagle cast upon me a glance of pleased surprise!

"As I started, unusual strength seemed to be

given. I soared upward toward the great yellow orb, I reached it, plucked the brand, and dashed down with it through the air. Hotter and hotter I grew until my wings caught fire. Friendly Robin, ever true, seeing me flutter in despair, hurried to my assistance and seized the brand. Instantly his breast was scorched, and so badly that it has ever since been red. Then Soaring Skylark, snatching the fiery treasure from Friendly Robin, landed it safely on the earth and the mission was fulfilled.

"I was nearly bare of plumage when I alighted but the applause was deafening. Kingly Eagle actually begged the other birds to present me with a feather, and all except Moping Owl brought me one—but Moping Owl screeched:

" 'Hoot, Hoot, go bare for all I care!'

"The birds were so disgusted that they voted that the culprit should be banished to a hollow tree, where ever since it has been freezing. As for me"—and Jenny bobbed her little brown head—

"by obtaining the fire-gift I was restored to the affection of Birdland, and while I do not twitter about it I am sure that the honor of flying highest *does* belong to me.

"I have enjoyed many love episodes, and so I am known as a perfect coquette. Legend insists that sometimes Robin and I would make a match; my winning notes always charm him, it is true, but when we begin to get intimate, my scolding ones repel him. Perhaps I'm too perky to suit his gentle, affectionate nature. There is a rime that exactly describes his feelings. It runs as follows:

" 'Jenny Wren fell sick
Upon a merry time,
In came Robin Redbreast,
And brought her sops of wine.

" 'Eat well of the sop, Jenny,
Drink well of the wine.
Thank you, Robin, kindly;
You shall be mine.'

" 'Jenny she got well
And stood upon her feet,
And told Robin plainly
She loved him not a bit.'

"I've not much time, however, to devote to my ideals, for from early dawn to close of day life is busy and practical. Every year are mating and nest-building and rearing of birdlings, and with cold weather comes the sudden call for migration —rushing away to the sunny South—and when spring comes, flying back perhaps even to the same nest, unless it has been stolen by some robber-bird in which to lay its eggs.

"I am such a skillful builder, I do not wonder that humans admire my neat, cozy cradle for my nestlings. 'A lichened manse,' one calls it; another, 'The wondrous house of the viewless Wren,' and he adds:

" 'Go compass sea and land in search of bliss,
Find, if you can, a happier home than this.'

"And now," added Aspiring Jenny, "I've piped long enough. I know that I am not big and gorgeous, but I am bravest of the brave. What more could one ask of a wee bird?" And Jenny as she paused gave another twitch to her stump of a tail.

FRIENDLY ROBIN

ROBIN had grown impatient, for it had always been his privilege to open morning concerts. Besides, when Jenny referred to their love-making he grew very restless, and when she alluded to the origin of his ruddy breast, he flew to a prominent twig, cocked his head on one side, and with his soft, bright eyes glanced appealingly at the Eagle. The Monarch understood the look as a Monarch should, and the instant Jenny paused, beckoned him to begin. His first notes were tremulous but they were followed by a jubilant burst of song:

"Jenny has told you that I scorched my feathers helping her bring a firebrand from the sun, but my scarlet waistcoat is accounted for in other ways. I was one of Donar's lightning messengers, and he insists that it was when I carried his sacred fire that my plumage burst into sudden flame. But I love better to recall my part in saintly legend—how the Christ Child fed me as I hopped about

FRIENDLY ROBIN

His Mother's door and how later as I fluttered near the Cross, trying to pluck a nail therefrom, a drop of blood touching my breast transformed its dull brown into scarlet. I was but a Robin, yet I had done what I could, and the Saviour blessed me and called me 'Bird of God,' 'Bearer of Good Tidings'—blue as the heavens should be my eggs, and happiness should follow my flight. Then at the wondrous Ascension I joined in glad Hosannas. Far and wide have I proclaimed the 'Good Tidings' which my gracious lover, John Burroughs, interprets as 'Cheerily, cheerily, cheer up, cheer up.'

"One legend tells how I helped the hungry monks of Brittany. Their crops had failed and with eyes cast upon the ground they walked in the fields. Perched in a tree, I watched them while pouring out my gushing strains. I waited until I saw them prayerfully raise their eyes heavenward, and then came my chance. I flew over them, dangling in my beak a great full ear of corn. They discovered it, beckoned me, seized the ear joyfully, and from it there sprang such a rich harvest as they

had not before reaped. And ever since Breton monks have been grateful to the little bird that not only taught them a lesson of faith, but also kept them from starving.

"Another title which I greatly value was given me by the Ojibway Indians. It is 'Friend of Man.' Among this tribe boys were obliged to undergo a long fast in order to gain the love of the Great Spirit, and if they bravely endured it, he would always protect them. One of the chiefs had a gentle, handsome son, and his father determined that to win the favor of God he should undergo such a fast as had never before been accomplished.

"He made the boy a tent of skins within which he placed a mat of rushes, and upon this the boy was to lie and meditate for twelve days and nights, without food or drink. On the twelfth morning his father appeared, saying cheerfully as he entered the tent: 'Now, my son, you may rise and eat.' There was no response, he glanced about him, the tent seemed empty; hearing a slight flutter, he looked up and there perched upon the ridge-pole was I, a beautiful Robin—his transformed boy—

and as he saw me I piped exultingly that as a bird I would ever be his friend and cheer him with my lays.

"I am also the very joy of children, and in summer-time we sing and play together. They first loved me because I covered with leaves the poor 'Babes in the Wood' whose tragedy has always touched them. So both old and young delight to listen to my morning song, for it helps them to begin the day 'cheerily.'

"It's natural for me to be up in music, for I give concerts nearly all the year round, in the North in summer, in the South in winter. The Northern poet hails in spring:

" 'Robins in the tree-tops,
Blossoms in the grass,
Green things a-growing
Everywhere you pass.'

"The Southern poet in winter describes how

" 'The Robin laughed in the orange tree;
Ho, windy North, a fig for thee;

While hearts are red and wings are bold,
And green trees wave us globes of gold,
Time's scythe shall reap but bliss for me;
Sunlight, song, and the orange tree.'

"My true home, however, is in 'Cherry-tree-land' even if winds are cold and branches bare.

"So in early spring I love the home-coming, and when happy Bluebird announces, 'Trually, trually, Spring is here,' I am ready to respond with a 'Cheerily, cheerily, cheer up, cheer up,' and again the poet listens to my glad note amid 'The whistle of returning birds'; then life gets busy with piping, mating and nest-building. Jenny may boast of her dainty home—she is indeed a rare architect and wrens are noted for their devotion to domestic matters.

"But no two families are ever alike. Robins are social in their instincts and curiously alive to the doings in both Birdland and Folkland, and too much interest in public affairs does not always make good home-keepers. Besides, my family have only time to build rude adobe, ramshackle nests

and stick them onto a low branch in the crotch of a tree, but none can outdo us in devotion to nestlings. We build near gardens or orchards where there are plenty of small fruits—it's hard work flying from tree to tree to gather these, or again hopping lightly over the lawn to peck for the early worm on which nestlings dote—but I forget, my address was to be a simple challenge for Kingship. I was just to assert my claims and I have rambled on, prating of family affairs; well, it's like me and like many another—we never know when to stop."

And then Robin, puffing out his tiny breast, thus concluded: "I am not big, I do not fly skyward, but instead I linger near man. Besides I play a most prominent part in the 'Bird Orchestra.' I am also a true aristocrat. You surely must note my marks of distinction in the Convention. Can any one outdo me in the sweetness of saintly legend? in works of cheer and faith and love? My song is but a burst of optimism. Are not such traits more appealing than size and strength and soaring power? As Friendly Robin paused inquiringly, Kingly Eagle winced.

MOPING OWL

A MOMENT'S pause and silence was broken by a portentous sound:

"Whoo-whoo-too-whoo-too-o-o-"

The birds shuddered as Moping Owl emerged from a hollow tree. It was strange to see the nocturnal bird appear in broad daylight, but Kingly Eagle must have invited it to take part, for it rose with solemn dignity and with noiseless flight alighted on an evergreen tree. It seemed a perfect gloom-bird in contrast to Cheery Robin, but in every Convention one finds a variety of dispositions.

And Moping Owl thus droned its tale:

"I cannot, like Friendly Robin and Aspiring Jenny, recall my part in saintly legend. In Holy Writ I am doleful and mourning and with Raven, Bittern and Cormorant, I am counted prophet of ruin and desolation. Mythological characters for diverse sins have been changed into owls. My his-

MOPING OWL

tory is so ancient that I do not remember whether I was a Monarch's or a baker's child; but I do know that I grew into such a lovely being that a jealous fairy determined to transform me. Touching me with her wand my eyes grew big and round through fright, my nose became a beak, my feet long and hooked. Soft feathers covered my body and wings were given me for flight. Blind with anger and terror, I kept striking my head against hard substances until I flattened my face and beak, and I have ever since borne marks of what happened. But there are always compensations—for in spite of my homely face, few birds possess such lovely plumage as mine.

"Jenny complains that when she was scorched I would not give her a feather, but my coat is too rare to be shared by such a plain little songster. Besides, winter was coming and, oh, how I dread the cold, and one must be practical. But, alas! My apparent selfishness was punished and it's a tragedy. I can, even now, recall the terrible words of the King as he pronounced my doom: 'Solitary Bird of Night, thou shalt never cease thy shivering,

and if thou ever darest venture forth in the sunlight, evil shall surely befall thee.'

"My love-story is another tragedy and now I will tell it: One night in glancing up at the golden disk of the moon I descried the shadowy outline of a charming lady. I felt sure that she was smiling down upon me. Sleepy birds were at roost—I could have her all to myself—I would woo her. Ruffling my feathers about my neck in order to present a stylish appearance, I flew noiselessly up a long, tired way and as I approached her, I addressed her in dulcet tones as follows:

" 'Beautiful Moon-Princess, I love you, will you marry me?' She gazed upon my goggle-eyes and only laughed, and that fired me to still greater earnestness, so I repeated:

" 'Oh, Princess of the Moon, please, please marry me, for I love you very dearly.' The more fervent I grew the more she laughed, and as she was chewing a betel-nut she nearly choked, but at last replied: 'Give me time to finish my betel-nut, Mr. Goggles, and then I will say yes.'

"I promised and delightedly flew back to my

hollow in the tree, but growing impatient night after night I flew up to the Moon-lady with the same plea. Finally she became perfectly discouraged about how to free herself from Mr. Goggle-Eyes as she wickedly called poor me, and then she hit upon the following ruse:

"Saying over her nut a moon-charm, she tossed it to the earth. There was a brilliant streak through the air, and what should alight but a dainty honey-bird decked out in gorgeous plumage. It had promised the Moon-Lady to keep out of my sight and thus save her from becoming my wife. And it was very long before I knew that the honey-bird was her transformed betel-nut. So naturally I appeared again and again before the fair lady and she always met my query in the same way. But now the secret is revealed, and my heart is saddened by treachery and despair. Even yet I sometimes gaze up towards my fair Princess, sobbing: 'Hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-oh.' Yes, I long for

" 'A bride who is fair and bold,
And who loveth the wood's dark gloom.'

"Failing in love, I became an even more grotesque personality. I formed the habit of keeping my eyes firmly fixed in their sockets, and I had been so imposed upon that I learned to turn my head squarely around in order to avoid danger. In so doing I can always know what is behind as well as before me. With mocking laugh and rasping note I haunt the dim forest. I can change witches into screech-owls, and no charm is effective unless an owlet's wing is cast into the bubbling cauldron. One heroic deed I can recall. It was when Genghis Khan, the world conqueror, fleeing from his enemies, was hiding in a cave. It was I that bravely guarded the entrance until his pursuers had passed by, so to the Tartars I am a lucky emblem.

"Jenny and Robin speak proudly of their poet-lore. I can say little on that subject, for with few exceptions poets call me only a doleful emblem; I am grateful to the dramatist, Shakespeare, for in his gayer mood he makes me a bit funny and popular.

"I have narrated the story of my tragic life,

feeling sure that knowing it you will reward me by voting me King of Birdland. And now I will offer yet better proof of my real fitness for office.

"While I know I am grotesque in appearance and cold and shrinking in character, the picturesque Greeks discovered in me, 'Twilight-loving solitary Owl,' true wit and beauty. The wise Goddess Minerva was greatly attracted by my shy blinking expression and noiseless flight in the moonlight, and when she discovered my 'Five Wits' she called me to come and sit at her side as counselor, and in both Art and Literature I have ever been her 'Lightning Bird,' her benign 'Emblem of Wisdom.' Advised by me how wondrous became her influence over Greece. Surely political wisdom is counted great among kingly attributes.

"Besides, as mysterious ruler of darkness may I not with my noiseless flight and observations taken from my solitary point of vantage uncover plots with which Birdland is full? while my startling 'hoot' or 'screech' would down any uprising. Such gifts are of untold value in a leader.

"One plea more and I retire to await the vote of the Convention. I refer to my religious bearing so necessary in royalty. The poet Longfellow in his 'Grave Bird of Hyperion' compares me to a monk who chants a midnight mass in the vast temple of Nature, 'A Pillar Saint, a very Simeon Stylites' of Birdland."

And with this sage suggestion the "Simeon Stylites of Birdland" turned upon his aërial perch and vanished into the darkness of the hollow tree, and from out the stillness there echoed back a dolorous "Whoo-whoo-whoo-whoo-to-whoo." And the birds, seeing Moping Owl disappear, hummed a little song of pleasure.

TWITTERING SWALLOW

THE Chairman with Eagle eye glanced among the songsters and beckoned to Twittering Swallow. At once it hopped upon a slender, conspicuous perch and thus began its sportive lay:

"Don't expect such a tiny prattler as I to rival in dignity 'Moping, ancient, solitary Owl.' I hardly recognized his Majesty until he doled out his tragic tale. How could I, for his noiseless flight is in darkness while I in brightest sunshine go skimming over the sky?

"I am not intimate either with home-loving Jenny or friendly Robin that both linger near the dwelling of man. It is true, however, that happiness always abides in a home where I make my nest of clay under the eaves, and that I dart about the fields spearing flies for my noisy brood. With 'No feet, all wings' I'm only a part of the merriment of Nature, a symbol of happy summer days.

"My family was founded in a fabulous age. Then it was that some children, building mud-houses upon the edge of a cliff, had a magic charm cast over them and were transformed into swallows, and ever since swallows have built houses of clay and played in the upper air. 'Clime-changing swallows' we are, for we best love the time when the migratory spirit is upon us and in great columns we go circling over the sky. Humans watch us, for high flight presages warm weather, while if we fly low, a storm is sure to follow.

"I am wee, I know, to aspire to a Kingship, but I may claim a share in Holy Story for as the 'Bird of gentle beak' I assisted in building the sky, and it is told that once when the gates of Eden were open I darted in and prated with Adam and Eve. And there is another deed that I have done with truly saintly results. I hesitate to twitter about it, for it's the story of a text and a sermon, and these do not usually form part of a political Convention but as I love unique things here goes my tale:

"Once in a famous land a King and his Court

TWITTERING SWALLOW

were gathered in an old Saxon hall to decide what action to take about some missionaries that had come from a distant land and with chant and crucifix were begging the King to accept Christianity. Just as the arguments were becoming serious I, as a plump little prelate, flew swiftly through the hall, and a priest who watched me arose and said:

"'You remember, O King, that which sometimes happens in winter when you are seated with your earls and thanes; your fire is lighted, your hall warmed, while without are rain and snow. Then comes a swallow flying across the hall; it enters by one door and leaves by another. The brief moment while it is within is pleasant to it, for it feels not rain nor cheerless winter weather, but the moment is brief—the bird vanishes in the twinkling of an eye. Where does the little bird come from, where does the little bird go, as he passes from winter to winter? Such, methinks, is the life of man on earth compared with the uncertain time beyond; we know not what is before or after. If, then, this new doctrine may teach us somewhat of

greater certainty, let us regard it.' So it was that my unconscious text given on the wing helped more than all the chants and processions, for by it Christianity was accepted.

"Among monkish legends associated with birds is one about my family that I love. It was once when the swallows insisted in building their nests around a chapter-house, and they worked very noisily even while the Holy Fathers were at silent prayer. The Fathers were naturally indignant, for they seemed unable to frighten the little builders away. They appealed to the pious old Abbot, who took it very calmly and silenced the monks by saying:

" 'Have we not houses of clay,
Quite as fragile, not more fair,
And shall we resolve
Their tabernacles to dissolve,
Asking God our own to spare?'

"The monks were so mortified that the tiny architects were allowed to remain even until the

autumn. Then when they gathered in columns preparing to migrate, the Abbot, raising his hand in blessing, said, 'Christian birds, depart in peace.' Can you wonder I love the story?

"I find it to be the fashion of this Convention for the 'Birds of the Ages' to quote from their poet-lore, and I follow their beautiful example. It's funny that a bird like me that can only twitter may claim so many 'Swallow Flights of Song.' One poet watching me spearing flies called me 'Butcher-Bird.' I'll forgive him, for if he could have seen the gaping beaks of my nestlings he would have understood. Besides, in sentimental mood he allows me to carry a fascinating love-message to his Princess:

" 'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

" 'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

" 'O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her and pipe and woo her and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

"My daintiest picture is drawn by one that even converts my twitter into a real song:

" 'Like a living jewel she sits and sings;
Fain would I read her riddle aright,
So strong in a thing so slight.'

"I may not make a striking appeal for Kingship I'm so tiny and chittering; besides, as I delight in skimming over the sky I would never keep quiet long enough to sit upon a throne. Let Moping Owl enjoy that privilege. I might, however, assist a King as Prime Minister, for in my soarings how easy to glance about Birdland, watch its gossip and politics, bring his Majesty the news and offer him good advice. While I can never rouse Birdland with a 'Cock-a-doodle-doo!', other birds always respond to my merry note." Twittering Swallow bowed and hopped away.

GABBLING GOOSE

AS Twittering Swallow paused a loud cackle was heard, and what should alight on a low branch but a goose. It perched awkwardly while it gabbled very fast:

"I was just on the way from the water to my feeding ground, for I am most punctual in regard to dinner hour. Hearing as I passed a little rustle and chirp, I looked up and spied Twittering Swallow and the curious gathering in the grove." Then, glancing at Kingly Eagle, Gabbling Goose exclaimed: "How dare you call any kind of a Convention without summoning me, for I know more on any subject you may discuss than you all put together." A low amusing response was heard as the birds gazed upon the foolish fowl.

Naturally Kingly Eagle seemed a bit interested —anything *loud* inspired his Majesty. So Gabbling Goose was allowed to proceed and this is

how it gabbled: "Things saintly and fabulous, historic and artistic, proverbial and literary, belong to my family, but not poetic ones—I am too practical for silly rimes. Now let me prove my statement. I gained my place in saintly lore on account of cunning and cleverness. Sometimes I have been worshiped as a god while charitable St. Martin and knightly St. Michael were both devoted to me.

"It would take a 'wild-goose-chase' to hunt up my fables, but I ask, 'Have any of you typical "Birds of the Ages"—as you call yourselves—a picture of your forebears taken over three thousand years ago? I have—it's a fresco in the Boolak Museum and upon it are represented six geese. That's something to form the beginning of one's story. Besides, as a kind of pot-hook decoration on Cypriote vases or in squatty statuettes, I have been known since ancient days. I am proud of the 'Boy with the Goose,' for it so plainly reveals the fact that little Hercules found me a hard bird to strangle.

"Robin may prate of his friendly deeds to

GABBLING GOOSE

humans, but I have done more for them than he. What might have happened to Rome had not sacred members of my family given the historic 'Cackle' on a memorable night in 'The brave days of old.' The geese saved the Eternal City.

"I'm not, however, always proud of our actions, specially of the time when with a goat I led a wild crusading rabble over Germany and Hungary; and also when flocks of geese peopling fens and marshes of the British Isles robbed so many corn-fields that a fine was enacted just as from human thieves.

"Proverbially I take high rank. 'By the goose' was the oath of wise Socrates; 'The older the goose the harder to pluck' refers to a miser and his money—and as for 'wild-goose-chase,' you will understand it only when you try to catch wary me.

" 'To cook one's goose' recalls a story about a King of Sweden. Once with a very small force he attacked a well-garrisoned town. The inhabitants were amused that he should appear with so few soldiers, and in derision they hung out a goose

for him to shoot. But the King knew what he was about and instead set fire to the town. The terrified inhabitants too late called upon him in despair; whereupon he promptly replied, 'I came to cook your goose.'

"You birds have probably been chattering of domestic affairs. You are always so excited about the rearing of your nestlings, but I consider this too personal a topic for such a public gathering. My judgment is good on many subjects, and if humans only better understood my characteristics they would know that when they call one 'a goose' they really show him honor, proving him witty and alert.

"I must gabble to you of our wondrous migrations—how, obeying an ancient law and led by a captain, we follow in a great wedge-shaped mass, streaming over the sky, bound on a pilgrimage of perhaps thousands of miles. Do you birds watch us as we go and listen to our piercing 'Honk, honk,' as we cleave the air? The sight must be magnificent. Farmers who study the weather as they see us say over the old prophecy:

" 'Wild geese, wild geese ganging to the sea,
Good weather it will be;
Wild geese, wild geese ganging to the hill,
The weather it will spill.'

"Throughout our history we have done very much for humans. Such a debt of gratitude as they owe us! Think of the manuscripts made by our tiny quills before steel pens were invented. Economical old days they were when one writer after finishing his book declared:

" 'With one sole pen I wrote this book,
Made of a gray goose quill;
A pen it was when I it took,
A pen I leave it still.'

"But, alas! after all that our quills have accomplished how little has been the appreciation, for we are usually portrayed as stuffed or garrulous or cackling or waddling or greedy or foolish. There is, however, one literary goose that humans love—that 'rarest of birds' served at Bob Cratchit's Christmas dinner.

"I am always ready to cackle, but not being invited to make an address, courtesy tells me I should stop. I am a curious fowl and wish I might know why you are all gathered in Convention. I'm too polite to ask—but if it's a political issue just call upon me to decide. If you need a President, elect me; if you desire a King well up on all subjects, here I am, crown me. Now I'll proceed to my dinner, but please remember that I am fit and ready for any honor; give me a Kingship and I will gabble majestically."

SOARING SKYLARK

FOR a moment all was still, and then the sweetest little chorus of welcome resounded through Birdland:

"All hail, the Sire of Song appears,
The Muse's eldest born;
The Skylark in the dawn of years,
The poet of the morn."

Thus was Soaring Skylark greeted by the tuneful choir as, springing from its lowly nest, it paused upon a twig and gayly warbled forth:

"Larikie, larikee lee.
Wha'll gang up to Heaven with me?
No' the lout that lies in his bed.
Up in the lift go we,
Tee-hee, tee-hee, tee-hee, tee-hee."

It was a relief from Gabbling Goose to listen to the blithe strains of Soaring Skylark: "You rightly hail me 'Sire of Song,' for even before creation's dawn, seven times daily I soared singing to Heaven, but though my tryst is far away in the clouds, I am but a tiny earthly minstrel with my nest in the stubble, for while

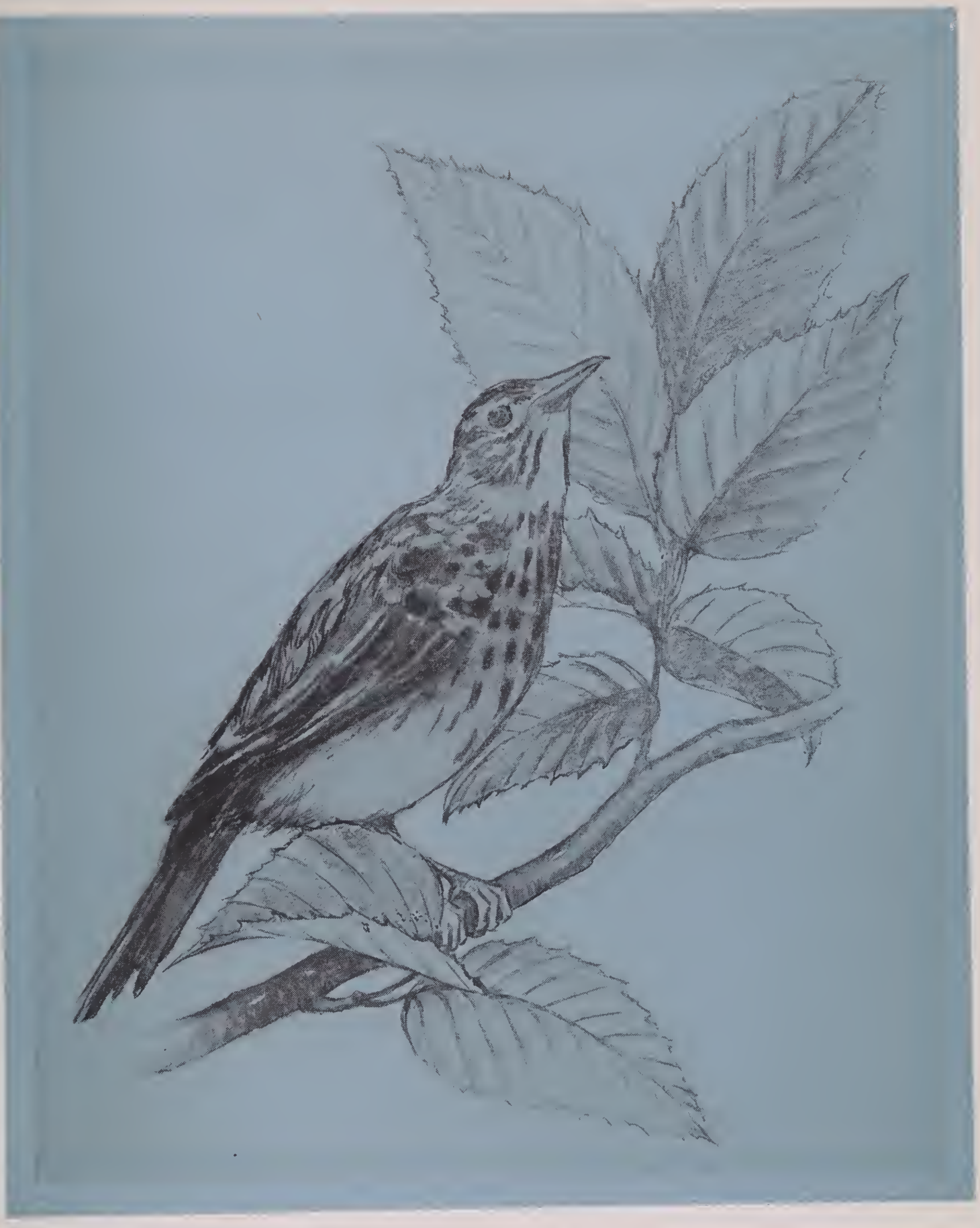
" 'I soar highest from the earth,
I ever leave the lowest nest.'

"Merry morn belongs to me and some one has said:

" 'He who is up with the Skylark sings like one.'

"Chanticleer may dispute my title of 'Matin Bird,' for he calls himself 'Bird of Dawn,' but as he is trumpeter and I am singer, our missions do not clash. Let him strut about his barnyard proclaiming a new day, while I soar into rosy skies and trill my anthem of praise for sunrise glow.

"Romans honored me by naming a legion



SOARING SKYLARK

'Alauda,' and I was national bird of early Gaul, for the savages believed that a humble musician so rich in melody would make the best emblem of courage. Yet I will not flute of military or national honors, but of my 'sprinklings from the sky' and of how charmingly they have been caught up by poetic, listening humans. This is my greatest glory, and of this I must twitter if I would claim title to Kingship, for never bird had so many laureates as I.

"Blithe Dan Chaucer, himself 'Poet of the Dawn,' always honored 'the merry lark,' as 'Messenger of Day'; and Lyly asks:

" 'Who is't now we hear?
None but the lark so shrill and clear;
Now at Heaven's gate she claps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings.'

"Shakespeare calls me a 'Blythesome Bird,' and he lets me prate of the time

" 'When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks.'

"And how delightfully he describes my rousing Phœbus Apollo:

" 'Hark, hark, the lark at Heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes;
With everything that pretty bin
My lady sweet, arise,
Arise, arise.'

"Even stately Milton turns from sublime strains to listen to my bubbling song:

" 'To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From her watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled morn doth rise.'

"Coquettish Herrick invokes my aid in one of his romances:

" 'God speed, for I this day,
Betimes my mattens say;
Because I doo
Beginn to woo,
Sweet singing lark,
Be thou my clark,
And know thy when
To say amen.'

"I am to Shelley 'A blythe Spirit' and to Hogg a 'Musical Cherub' that 'soars singing away'; Coleridge, in reply to a child's question, says:

" 'The lark is so full of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings, and forever sings he,
"I love my love, and my love loves me." '

"Little Pippa, too, lets me strike an exquisite note in her message of cheer:

" 'The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;

God's in His Heaven—
All's right with the world.'

"Tennyson listens and loves my raptures as he exclaims:

" 'The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he neared
His happy home, the ground.'

"And yet again he voices my note:

" 'Now sings the woodland loud and long,
And distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.'

"I add a picture of my simple earthly mission; it is from one of quaint Eliza Cook's vignettes:

" 'Up in the morning while the dew
Is splashing in crystals o'er him;
The ploughman hies to the upland rise,

But the lark is there before him;
He sings while the team is linked to the share,
He sings when the mist is going.'

. . . . . .

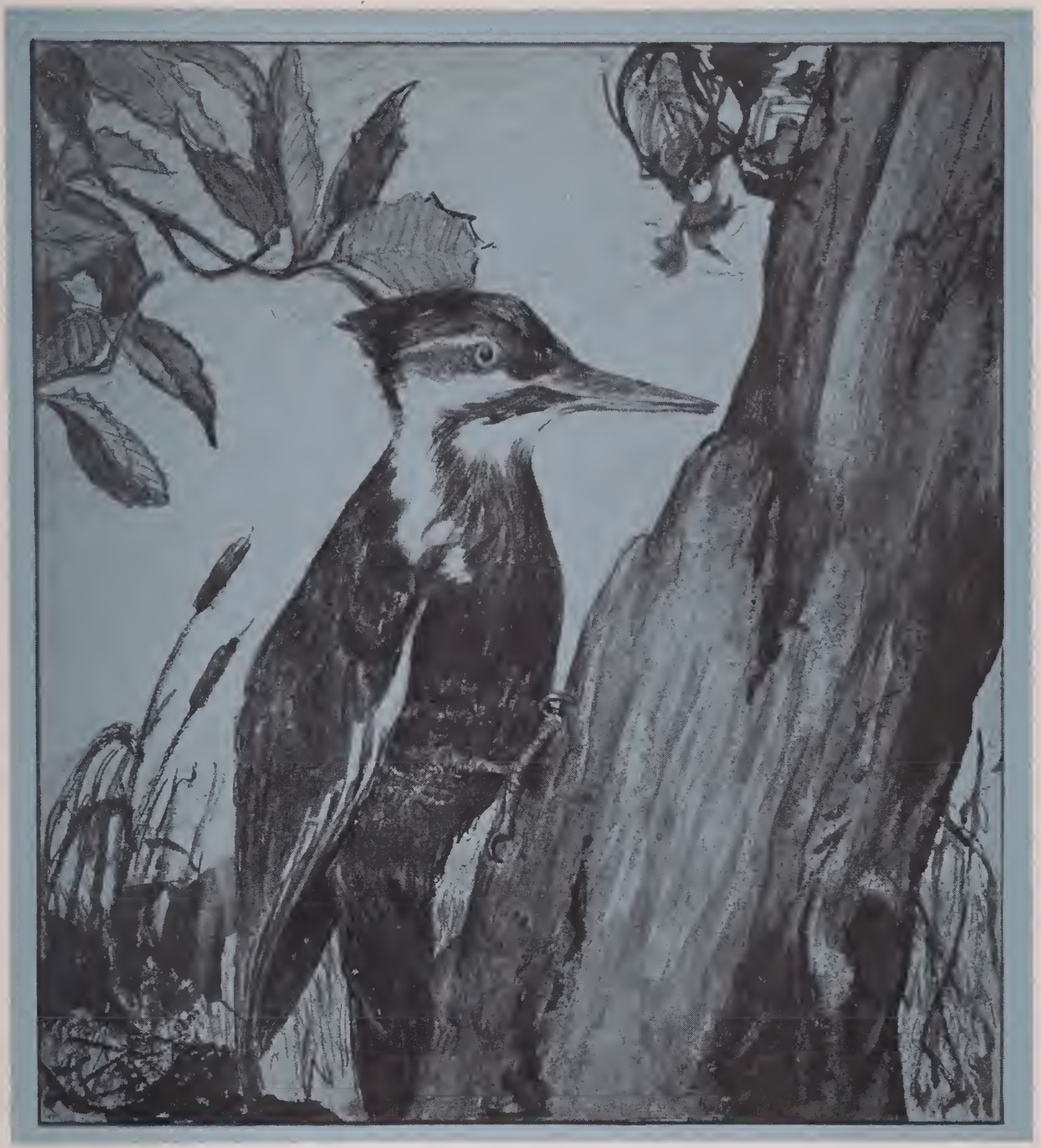
Now his pinions are spread o'er the ploughman's head,
Now he drops in the furrow behind him;
Oh, the lark is a merry and constant mate,
Without favor or fear to bind him.'

"These are but snatches from my delightful human impressionists to whom I have fluted and who love my gushing lyrics, 'Sire of Song'—emblem of early rising, praise and hope—these make my poetic plea for Kingship."

STURDY WOODPECKER

AS Soaring Skylark's blithe carol ceased, a ringing cry was heard, and Sturdy Woodpecker appeared; it had been invited to take part, and, though hard at work when the summons came, it accepted the invitation with pleasure. The brave little forester clung to the trunk of a tree and, using his bill for a gavel, drummed upon a branch thus calling the Convention to order: "I am too busy to be like Soaring Skylark ever pouring out a gushing song—indeed, I'm neither musical nor poetic—but this is well—for in Birdland as in Folkland there must be practical as well as sentimental members of society."

Sturdy Woodpecker need not have explained, for its rattling tattoo was in such striking contrast to Soaring Skylark's clear note that one might know it could only drum. It seemed, however, very fond of dress, for it was arrayed in a red cap and bright gown, and it made such a big racket



STURDY WOODPECKER

for a small bird as it continued: "I am almost as old as the 'Sire of Song,' for I was present even when the Great Spirit created the world. At first he made it just smooth and round, and, as the birds were fluttering and preening their wings, he called them together and said to them: 'Come, my birds, I have formed you and given you for your home a beautiful blue sky, and now you must help with your claws and beaks to pile up mountains and hollow out places for lakes and rivers.

"So the good birds at once commenced. They pecked with their beaks and scratched with their claws. Kingly Eagle with his huge talons had not the slightest difficulty in throwing up a mighty mountain, but in those merry old days I was proud and self-willed; I would not soil my bright coat even to obey the Great Spirit by pecking and scratching and very foolishly refused.

"But the others worked bravely on and soon all was finished. Hollows were filled with broad lakes, sparkling rivers, rippling brooks, and sweet fountains, and the Great Spirit was pleased and thanked the birds and allowed them to drink in

cool, refreshing streams. I hoped he had overlooked me, but, alas! it was in vain—very soon he called me to him and told me that he had found me lazy and ungrateful, and, worst of all, disobedient. Such dreadful sins!

"As punishment, nevermore would I be allowed to thrust my beak into lake, river, brook or fountain; but instead I must forever cling to a tree, either hacking at the dusty wood or gazing up into the sky, always plaintively piping a little 'plui, plui,' for raindrops to fall and quench my thirst."

The long-rolling rat-a-tat became very emphatic as the Sturdy Woodpecker added: "I have been tapping ever since. Take warning from my sad fate, and whenever you hear my 'tap, tap' remember to be obedient, for if you fail, something is sure to happen. You are just like humans—some love to obey and some do not—and it's always bad for those who do not.

"I have yet another legend to relate. It is about a wicked miser. It seems that one day when the Lord and St. Peter were walking together,

they were very hungry, and, looking through a window, they saw an old woman with a mutch upon her head. They entered the house and asked her to give them a bannock, and she promised to make them one. They watched eagerly as she took a very small piece of dough and rolled it out; and as she rolled, it spread miraculously until it covered the whole griddle. This was more than she would give, so she took a smaller lump, and to her surprise it spread in the same way.

"The third time she took a bit so tiny that they could hardly see it, and, lo, it increased like the others. The selfish creature was discouraged. 'It's all too big,' she cried. 'I will give you nothing'—and the Lord was wroth and replied: 'Since you love me so little as to grudge me even a morsel, you shall become a bird and ever seek your food between bark and bole and drink only when it rains.'

"So with the red mutch still upon her head, she began to shrink, and she shrank until she turned into a woodpecker and flew up the chimney, and ever since she has been hacking at the trees, call-

ing for a drop to cool her tongue. So, birds, here's another lesson—be generous as well as obedient.

"While I have been selfish and unruly I have never been a wicked robber like Mr. Crow and Mr. Jay and others I might mention; there are really some good points in my character—for my industry the Greeks called me 'Carpenter Bird'; they compared my forceful blows to hacking heard in the dockyard.

"American Indians give me real honor—for if an Indian can get it he wears the head of one of my family as an emblem of good luck, believing that through such a talisman there may be imparted to him a woodpecker's ardor and industry; and as to courage, Robin Hood, hearing my ringing cry, was often inspired by it to do his merry pranks in the Greenwood.

"I may not, like Soaring Skylark, boast of laureates. Indeed, poets find little in me to admire. One even calls me 'A fool that laughs at nothing.' But all feathered folk cannot make the same appeal. I hear the note of Musical Nightingale—yes—there she is flying onto a prominent branch.

How plainly she is dressed compared to me—yet she is 'Queen of Song'—while I, fantastic little dryad, can only tap and drum. But there are different ways of breaking the solitude of the woods and I do my own part sturdily.

"Of one thing I am certain. I should never have been asked to participate in your discussions between the raptures of Soaring Skylark and the melody of Musical Nightingale had not the Convention felt that my prosaic traits entitled me to a vote. Diligence, obedience, generosity—these are kingly—and best of all by my insistent drumming I could always keep Birdland in order."

MUSICAL NIGHTINGALE

AND now as musical warblings were heard there flew forward a small dusky bird—a contrast indeed to Sturdy Woodpecker. It was "Divine Philomela"—there was no mistake—the very first notes that streamed through the air proclaimed her title. Alighting on a low thorn-bush and without prelude, she thus began her winsome tale:

"I ask no higher honor, but as Queen will always preside, and with musical gushings, fearless and alert, will ever add melody to your discussions and thus work for the joy of life. And I have great influence, for other small birds sharing in the gossip of the trees stop to listen as I pour out the raptures of my heart, not a note of which is borrowed from any other songster.

"It is as Queen that the King has invited me to take part and to be in the fashion I must recount

MUSICAL NIGHTINGALE

my legends. I hesitate a bit to do this as they unfortunately are not in keeping with my queenly nature; but in Birdland one must follow the rules of a Birdland Convention. So here goes my story with all due apology for my wicked theft:

"Soaring Swallow, whose original name was Procus, did not twitter that we were related, but we were both children of King Pandion, who, in a fabulous age, ruled over Athens. We had one lover between us who professed to be devoted to both—but he really persecuted us so terribly that we fled from him, calling upon the gods to deliver us. Our prayer was answered. Procus was transformed into Soaring Swallow, and I, Philomela, into Musical Nightingale.

"Proving the sweetest singer in Birdland, I became such a favorite that I was often invited to perform in public; but, alas! there's always something, and I had but one eye. I tried in every way to conceal my misfortune by cocking my bit of a head in all directions, but it was of no use, and in my despair an evil thought struck me, and I committed such a wicked deed that afterward I was

condemned to sing the lullaby of the other birds. It was when I had been summoned to lead the bridal chorus at a fairy wedding that I committed the sin.

"With only one eye I was too proud to accept the invitation, and while trying to devise some excuse, I discovered a blindworm struggling among dead leaves. An idea struck me—I would steal its eye—it might be difficult—but I was so secluded in my leafy bower that no bird would ever know. So I watched for days and it really seemed as if the poor worm suspected me, for I never caught it napping until the very eve of the wedding. I flew down quickly, pecked out its eye, and popped it into my own empty socket—and then I sang out merrily: 'Ho, Ho, now I have two bright eyes, now I'll go to the wedding and sing as gayly as I please. I'll see how every bird is dressed, every tiny feather preened'; I fully intended to return the eye later on, but it proved such a comfort that I could not spare it, yet it has been a great source of anxiety, for I never dare fall asleep lest that blindworm catch me napping and take back its lost

treasure, so I must be awake both day and night to keep up my courage.

"There's another legend of my wakefulness that does not involve me in such dreadful tragedy. This describes how one night as I was perching upon a vine-stock I did fall asleep, and when I awoke I found that its tendrils had twined themselves all about me. I had such trouble in freeing myself that since then I have never dared fall asleep, lest the virgin's seal should pinion me so firmly that I could never get away.

"I care not for gaudy dress. The Cardinal may wear a coat as beautiful as his note is rapturous. Can he realize what danger lurks in brilliant plumage? My coat renders me inconspicuous. Indeed, it would be hard to find me when I sit within a mass of greenery—and while I care not for my legends, my delight is in my song. I pour out my delicious love-notes either to the setting sun or the rising moon. I sing in the daytime, too, but amid the tangle of minstrelsy my low voice is not heard. The Vesper Sparrow and Hermit Thrush with its bell-like note, and also other

songsters, love to trill at nightfall when the noisy world is hushed. How funny that one of the wisest of poets that claimed to be an ornithologist insisted that I sing only in the night-time. He made the following observations about me:

" 'I think the nightingale if she should sing by day, when every goose is cackling, would be thought no better a musician than the wren.'

"Like Soaring Skylark, I am a special melodist in Birdland, and through the ages poet after poet has been romancing about me. Unseen, I allow my worshipers to approach very near.

" 'To sing like a nightingale' has been an inspiration in many lands and perhaps nowhere so great as among the Zingari of Hungary. These peasants may not know a note of music, but like me simply interpret Nature's harmonies, and they thus give utterance to such matchless melodies that noted musicians love to linger among them.

"In Greece I was 'Light-Winged Dryad of the Trees.' Sappho and I both sang of love—she as 'Lesbian Nightingale,' I as 'Sweet Plaintive Sappho of the Dell.' It is true that in England,

King Edward the Confessor tried to banish me from the country because I once interrupted his pious meditations by waking the woodland with my incessant music; he even prayed that my voice might never again be heard in the land. I left the forest, but returned after the death of the King, determined to just sing on, for I felt that my music could outwit even royalty; and I was right for ever since my English worshipers have drawn poetic inspiration from my delicious love notes.

"One associates me with my mate that

" 'Wrapped and fond
Listening sits on a bough beyond.'

One hears my

" 'Murmurs musical and swift jug jug.'

Another calls me

" 'The merry Nightingale
That crowds and hurries and precipitates
With fast thick warble his delicious notes.'

Yet another

" 'Chantress of the woods'

while 'The Poet of the Night' dedicated to me an ode that is

" 'A joy forever.'

"Legend describes my fancy for the rose and 'The Sweet Lyrist' would make me warble to it of love:

" 'There's a bower of roses by Bendemere's stream
And the nightingale sings round it all the day long;
In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet dream,
To sit in the roses and hear the birds sing.

" 'That bower and its music I never forget,
And yet when alone in the bloom of the year,
I think—is the nightingale singing there yet?
Are the roses still bright by the calm Bendemere?'

"I have a variety of notes and one poet hearing them dedicates to me the following graceful lines:

" 'O nightingale, thou surely art
A creature of a fiery heart.
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce,
Tumultuous harmony and fierce.
Thou sing'st as if the god of wine
Had helped thee to a valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shade and dews and silent night
And steady bliss and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.'

"One of my modern and most valued tributes, if you will believe it, I received from Crowing Chanticleer. Proud as he is of himself, he actually exclaims:

" 'To sing, to sing, but how, after hearing the faultless crystal of your note, can I ever be satisfied again with the crude blazen blare of mine?'

"Well, Birds, I have led you through a perfect maze of song and as 'Queen of Night' I could war-

ble on forever, but the King is beckoning, so our poetic ramble must end." And the flute-like notes of the tiny fairy charmer died away in a prolonged trill.

KINGLY EAGLE

AND now the Chairman's harsh screech resounded through the air: "You have listened to Aspiring Jenny, Friendly Robin, Moping Owl, Twittering Swallow, Gabbling Goose, Soaring Skylark, Sturdy Woodpecker, Musical Nightingale—each after its kind, presenting claims to my Kingship. Queer natures you praters possess! What a variety of pleas you do offer! I must pause a moment to consider them, specially those of Jenny, for she has made such a tragic effort to get my crown.

"Well, Jenny, you surely *have* made the most of your two exploits, how fired by ambition you stole a skyward ride upon my crest and, bobbing up your smart little head, proclaimed yourself victor, and then later how in expiation you did bring fire from heaven to light the earth. Small matters may annoy the greatest in Birdland, but as the trait of a true Monarch is magnanimity, I ignore your at-

tempt—you are a delightful little housekeeper—your highest aspiration should surely be 'Queen of the Home.'

"Dear Friendly Robin, bloodthirsty ruffian as I am, I do love your saintly deeds. But what can I do? I am always hungry, and for what were my great claws given but to seize my prey from other birds and from the earth? My predatory habits and soaring powers would never appeal to you with your gentle ways. Always linger near man and peck away while I soar.

"Moping Owl, your history is curious indeed. You would seem at first sight to be always hatching a conspiracy, but perhaps you are not half so bad as you are painted. I did not realize you were such a coquette, but I enjoyed your love-story hugely. Doubtless if the fair Moon Lady had accepted your Lordship, your whole life might have been changed—who can tell? Let us show sympathy for your sobbing note and instead of criticizing your winks and goggles, admire your beautiful plumage. Your aspirations, however, are absurd. You are too moody and sedentary to rule.

KINGLY EAGLE

A King should be alert—and what a funny-looking one you would make!

"Twittering Swallow, I know well your sportive ways. I see you up in the sky skimming and wheeling about, now high, now low, and your text on the wing was lovely and its influence wonderful. However, you are but a tiny sprite, you could not remain long enough in the air to be King.

"Gabbling Goose, you are immensely clever and well you know it. It's too bad you are not better appreciated, but gabble away and in time you may get due honor. Your genius should have revealed to you the simple fact that you are too awkward to ever preside. So try to be happy in just assisting me with counsel—I need it.

"Soaring Skylark, happy little minstrel, I do adore you as 'Sire of Song' and I congratulate you on your many laureates. Rest happy in your beautiful mission—that of making music in Birdland.

"You, Sturdy Woodpecker, are much too plebeian to rule over other birds, though it is true that you are a most picturesque winged forester—don't be discouraged about laureates; while there are

numerous families of birds, hardly a hundred have laureates. Stick to your practical service, that of 'Tap-tap-tapping,' so giving to others daily lessons in obedience, industry, and loyalty. What could be finer?

"It is a joy to me that you, Musical Nightingale, do not aspire to my throne. Beautiful 'Queen of Night,' what a fascination is yours! It is strange that amid the multitude of nature's sounds from insects' orchestra to lion's roar, you, gentle Philomela, never interrupt, and yet in your leafy bower you warble so charmingly both day and night that other birds pause to listen—and Folkland listens, too, and voices your praises.

"I have interrupted the Convention with my response to various appeals. I could not quietly listen to any more such claims for my disputed Kingship, as you call it—and yet Chattering Magpie, Tale-bearing Crow and others are begging to take part. Among them Condor, Vulture, and Albatross on account of their great size, but they all forget that they lose their grace when flying, while even on the wing I am always majestic.

"This Convention must not become wearisome as such gatherings often do, so no more pleas will be offered. How glad I would be if, following my advice, you would drop your claims, and with your varied talents form yourselves into a Cabinet to advise me as King. I trust you may decide to do this after listening to my convincing oration, which is to be the climax of the Convention; after it a vote will be taken.

"Before beginning it, however, I will read you a wireless which has just been received from Chanticleer." At the word "Chanticleer" there was such a twitter in the trees that only the loud clanging of Kingly Eagle's wing restored order. "I had for long been indignant with Chanticleer, because he tried to usurp my Kingship in France where I had been adored since the days of Julius Cæsar.

"In France Chanticleer became 'Cock of the Walk' and this is how it happened. A creative human looking over a barnyard fence descried the vain fowl strutting about, majestically clapping his wings and sounding his trump for the amusement of other greedy, chattering barnyard fowls.

The creative human watched his antics, revealing many caprices, and remembering that birds sometimes play human rôles, he dedicated to Chanticleer a drama full of philosophy.

"I was indignant, and yet could any creative human ever have recorded in dramatic fashion my doings, could he have watched me in my solitary eyrie amid dark rolling clouds, or again as with fierce beak and talons, I swooped down upon my prey, bearing it up to gorge my eaglets, or yet again, carrying them boldly upon my strong pinions, tempting them by gentle flight to soar. There is little social or romantic in my life. Chanticleer with his lusty ringing strains and feet planted upon the sod is only an earthly hero, but to have formed my drama would have required Olympian vision. These facts I have given to explain my feelings to Chanticleer and to tell you that his wireless fills me with joy. Listen to it:

" 'Greetings to all—sorry not to be present—but as I have to be heard on every occasion I send my message. I hear you are holding a political Con-

vention discussing a disputed Kingship. How perfectly absurd! Conditions in Birdland seem very like those in Folkland with which I am familiar, for I have been playing a human rôle. I am not one of your typical "Birds of the Ages," but instead devote myself to modern society, though there is, I know, in my family a lot of legend and ancestry that I might look up if only I had time.

" 'I have never like other birds acquired a set song, though as herald of dawn I give great variety to my far-flung clear note—very lustily and triumphantly it rings then to the listening world, which, at that hour, I have all to myself. "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" says alike to Birdland and Folkland, "Get up and carry a sunny spirit all the day." I know I am accused of being proud of myself—why should I not be boastful when my sole message is a "Crow"? And how the dear old "Poet of the Dawn" loved to listen to me. "It filled his herte with pleasure and solass."

" 'You must be enjoying some "Spread-Eagle" oratory—what boundless sway the Monarch-bird has enjoyed through the ages—you would make a

great mistake in Birdland if you tried to usurp his rule. Just one thing surprises me, that, governing over so many lands, he does not willingly concede me my honors in France—alas! the more one triumphs the more aspiring he becomes. Good luck to you all, but don't dispute Kingly Eagle's power. It is his by both might and right.'

" 'CHANTICLEER.'

"And now," screeched Kingly Eagle, "nevermore will I dispute Chanticleer. He confesses that he is boastful. Alas! so are we all. Now for my address," and spreading his pinions and throwing back his head he thus began:

"Why do you deny my Kingship? My superb strength and vision are mighty compared to yours.

" 'My gaze alone surveys
The sun's meridian splendor.'

And am I not typical of power and freedom as I go coursing in great spirals over the sky? It is possible that I might never have become emblematic had my fierce nature been too closely scruti-

nized; be that as it may, my title in Folkland is assured—whatever your dispute in Birdland.

"When Jupiter presided over the gods on Mount Olympus I was his favorite messenger, perching fearlessly on his thunderbolt. I was sacred to Vishnu and genii and cherubs were adorned with Eagles' wings; but, lovelier than all, I was emblem of Saint John the Divine because of his lofty inspirations, and in Holy Art I am soaring with him—and other saints when blinded by the sun or overtaken by storm have found protection under my hovering wings. In ancient times I was ensign of the King of Babylon, and when Cyrus of Persia conquered that Empire he admired its symbolic bird and took it for his own.

"In Rome I was selected for the Legionary standard and cast in bronze, silver, or gold was mounted upon a short staff, and though small in size I became victorious Eagle of the mighty Empire, carried in triumph from East to West, from North to South; and when an Emperor died, it was I that bore his soul from the flaming catafalque up to the gods on Mount Olympus. Rome

fell, but I was unconquerable. Constantine, Emperor of the East, adopted a double-headed Eagle to indicate his sway over both East and West, and either single or double I have adorned the standards of Italy, Austria, Germany and Russia; while in the United States I was made in 1782 the national emblem of liberty, and ever since have guarded the banner that waves

" 'O'er the land of the free
'And the home of the brave.'

I have laureates, too—to one I soar as the 'Child of Light.' Another describes my path as

" 'Bold and forth on
Leaving no trace behind.'

One alludes to a superstition regarding my great age and describes how every ten years I mount into the fiery regions of the sun and there consume my old feathers, and then flying into the sea emerge with new life:

" 'An eagle fresh out of the ocean wave,
Where he hath left his plumes all hoary gray,

" 'And decks himself with feathers youthly gay.'

To yet another I am

" 'Playmate of the storm,'

"For

" 'When the tempest's at its loudest,
On the gale the eagle rides.'

And how striking is my vignette drawn by a famous poet:

" 'He grasps the crag with hooked hands,
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed by the azure world he stands.

" 'The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls,
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.'

"Indeed, my laureates are always immortalizing my superb strength, keen vision, care for my eaglets and soaring powers. But best of all I am accounted true emblem of liberty. I now close my oration with a patriotic strain given me by an American laureate, and most emphatically the Monarch-Bird screeched as follows:

" 'True to his native sky
Still shall our eagle fly
Casting his sentinel glances afar,
Though bearing the olive branch
Still in his talons staunch
Grasping the bolts of the thunder of war.' "

The Eagle paused—the Convention was spell-bound—for a moment not a sound was heard—then a twittering and warbling as of a pleasant debate, and presently there rang out a chorus: "The Eagle is King, the Eagle is King." His Majesty glanced about him, waited until quiet was restored, and then added:

"Thanks for your vote of allegiance and thanks,

too, for your legends and poems. They have been delightful. I elect you all as my Cabinet to assist me in making Birdland a brave, happy, and united country, and now as the silver moon is preparing to hang out its great bright orb to light sleepy birds to bed, it's time to close the Convention. I am glad we have held it. Good night—and do not forget our marvelous fancies and your united pledge of loyalty."

Birdland was again roused by the King's whirring wings bearing his Majesty swiftly back to his eyrie in the giant crag. Then followed a twittering and pecking and fluttering in the trees, but presently the chitter chatter all died away, the wee birds all tucked their heads under their wings, solitary Owl was moping on a stump, all was silent except the wakeful Nightingale—"and it was singing still."

GOOD-BY TO CAROL

JUST one thing more happened, and that's all, for we must not forget inquisitive little Carol down in fairy-land listening to the musical Convention.

Now as everything was quiet and Carol was hanging her head in utter weariness, the beautiful fairy, glistening in the moonlight, appeared. It touched Carol with a star-tipped wand and, lo! she was again seated on the mossy bank and it was broad daylight! In softest tones the fairy said:

"I have given you, Carol, only the merest glimpse into Birdland. May it make you love better bird-lore and bird-song, and if you will commit to memory some of the lines of the bird-laureates they may be to you 'a joy forever.'

With these gentle suggestions the tones of the fairy charmer died away as the red coat and scarlet cap disappeared in the distance.

Carol gazed about her in wondering surprise as she recalled the magic grove and the marvelous treasures that it had opened out before her. Naturally she could not understand all the legends and poems—what little maiden could? But as she trudged away home she resolved to follow the fairy's advice to become more familiar with bird-lore and bird-song, and so to enjoy the merry sparkling outdoors, alive with many fancies and bearing such variety of messages to the little people of Folkland.

"Kindness we bestow and praise,
Laud their plumage, greet their lays;
Still beneath their feathered breasts
Stirs a history unexpressed,
Wishes there and feelings strong
Incommunicably throng;
What they want we cannot guess."

—Matthew Arnold.

GOOD~BYE

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